

Etikoppaka toys

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In news— The Government of India has conferred Padma Shri upon C. V. Raju of Andhra Pradesh in the art category to honour to the Etikoppaka wooden toy craft.

About C V Raju-

An agriculturist-turned-craftsman, Mr. Raju has his origins in Etikoppaka, a traditional craftsman village in Visakhapatnam district in coastal Andhra Pradesh. He is involved in promoting the toy craft and usage of natural dyes for the past few decades.

About Etikoppaka toys-

- These toys are made of soft wood and lacquer color. Coloured with natural dyes derived from seeds, lacquer, roots and leaves.
- The way of toy making is also known as turned wood lacquer craft. **The Etikoppaka toys are considered to be 'one with the nature' since they are made purely out of natural elements such as seeds, lacquer, bark, roots and leaves.**
- The wood derived to make these toys comes from the **'Ankudi Karra' tree (*Wrightia tinctoria*).**
- In the early development stages of the Etikoppaka toys, they were only used by children as toys for the purpose of playing.
- The natural dyes and wood used in these toys made them safe play with and durable. However, gradually the Etikoppaka toys adapted to a broad usage.
- Today, they can be used as toys, decoration items, utility items and even gifting items.
- For a long period of time, these toys were a part of the everyday lives of the people living here and in the

neighbouring villages.

- **Toy varieties include spinning tops, rattles, and animal figures.** Etikoppaka boxes are also used for storing jewellery and sacred materials like vermillion.
- The artisans who engage in this craft have received several awards from forum likes the National Innovation Foundation, **UNESCO CCI Seal of Excellence for Handicrafts and so on.**
- Moreover, these toys have also been displayed at various prestigious venues like the Rashtrapathi Bhawan.
- **The Geographical Indication (GI) tag provided to these toys in 2017** has further contributed to their significance.